

Merson House
3922 Old Columbia Pike
HO-629

Located about 100 feet north of the Old Columbia Pike, this 2 1/2 story American Four Square reflects many of the characteristics of this popular style including the box shape, high hipped roof, central gable dormer and full-width front porch. The house, sits on 0.62 acres, and is two bays wide and two bays deep.

This house is significant as an example of early suburban planned development in Howard County. it is part of an important intact corridor on the outskirts of Ellicott City lined with early 20th century buildings.

While several planned developments were built along the B&O Railroad's Washington branch near Laurel in the late 19th century, this development was one of the first of its type in the northern section of the county. Unlike neighboring counties, Howard County never experienced the housing boom created by arrival of rail service. This small development along Old Columbia Pike represents some of the few commuter oriented suburban housing built in the county before World War II.

Merson House
3922 Old Columbia Pike
HO-629

HISTORIC PERIOD CONTEXT:

Region: Piedmont
Period: Modern Period
Theme: Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
Resource Type: Residence/rural vernacular
Site Types: Standing structures

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. HO-629

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name) Merson House

historic

and/or common Merson House

2. Location

street & number 3922 Old Columbia Pike (MD 987) ☐ not for publication

city, town Ellicott City ☐ vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Maryland county Howard

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Thomas Merson

street & number 3922 Old Columbia Pike telephone no.: (410) 465-4087

city, town Ellicott City state and zip code Maryland 21043

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Howard County liber 481

street & number 8360 Court Avenue folio 511

city, town Ellicott City state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Located about 100 feet north of the Old Columbia Pike right-of-way, this 2 1/2 story American Four Square reflects many of the characteristics of this popular style including the box shape, high hipped roof, central gable dormer and full-width front porch. The house, which sits on 0.62 acres, is two bays wide and two bays deep. The door is in the east bay of the facade and the windows are arranged symmetrically with two pairs of windows on the second floor and a bank of three windows on the first floor. The hipped roof gable dormer holds a pair of windows.

A hipped roof porch supported by round columns runs the width of the facade. Three wood rails link the posts and a lattice apron covers the openings between the porches' brick piers.

There is a bay window on the north end of the west side and a recently added exterior brick chimney runs up the south end. Two windows flank the chimney on the second floor. On the east side four symmetrically spaced windows (all singles except for the window on the north end on the first floor which is paired) flank a single fixed pane square window in the center.

On the north side three windows surround a fixed pane window in the center and a single bay vestibule extends from the east end. All of the window except the fixed sash windows are double hung 3/1 sash with the panes divided vertically, and are flanked by louvered shutters.

The house has a rolled asphalt roof and rests on a cut random coursed stone foundation. A two-bay gabled-roof garage, probably not original, is north west of the house.

8. Significance

Survey No. HO-629

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or
Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G
Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The house abuts the scenic Cat Rocks Branch valley. Although aluminum siding covers the wood frame, the house is a significant example of vernacular Prairie Box design and retains its overall early 20th century character.

This house is significant as an example of early suburban planned development in Howard County. It is part of an important intact corridor on the outskirts of Ellicott City lined with early 20th century buildings.

While there were planned developments along the B&O Railroad's Washington branch near Laurel dating from the late 19th century, this subdivision was one of the first of its kind in the northern section of the country. Unlike neighboring counties, Howard County never experienced the housing boom created by the arrival of rail and streetcar lines. This tract along Old Columbia Pike represents one of the few pre-World War II developments that exist in the county.

Like many prosperous merchants in downtown Ellicott City, August Stigler, a wholesale flour dealer, moved outside of town to the hillside along Columbia Pike in the early 1920s. After purchasing 20 acres from Caleb Rogers in 1928, Stigler subdivided his land into 12 lots of nearly equal size, roughly 1/3 of an acre. The lots were all 70 feet wide and about 200 feet deep abutting the Cat Rocks Branch stream valley.

According to his son, August Stigler Jr., Stigler was capitalizing on the success of the street car line which connected Ellicott City with Baltimore. He believed that people would be attracted to affordable lots within distance of the Ellicott City station.

Construction of these houses began in 1928, but at least three lots long remained empty because of the Depression. Although no documentation has been found to confirm their origin, Stigler's son believes a number of the houses eventually built were ordered from popular catalogues of the period. The style of this house and its neighbors suggest this theory is a valid one.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. HO-629

Howard County Land Records
Interview with August Stigler, Jr.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .622Quadrangle name Ellicott City, MDQuadrangle scale 1:24000UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

Tax Map 25
Block 14
Parcel 131

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Amy Worden, Historic Sites Surveyor	
organization	Howard County, Department of Planning and Zoning	date
street & number	3430 Courthouse Drive	telephone (410) 313-2037
city or town	Ellicott City	state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2012
301-594-7600

3922
Old Columbia Pike
Ellicott City Quad
HO-629
HOWARD COUNTY





